

Make the minutes stop

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Make the minutes stop

by [BumblebeesAndDandelions](#)

Summary

They killed the dragon, and then they fell.

It was freezing. The shock of the water thrust them apart, and it took an eternity to claw his way to the surface, fighting the waves. When he came up for air, he was alone. He tread water, scanning the waves desperately for a glimpse of Hannibal. He wasn't supposed to be alone.

Notes

June 8 - "Breathe, damn you!" | Shock |

Title from The Torn Up Road by Siken, which was is a gorgeous poem that you should absolutely read.

The fall was endless. The slow tip, Hannibal holding him, and then they were falling, clutching to each other, and Will felt at peace for the first time in years, maybe in forever. They had fought and killed the great red dragon, Hannibal had finally witnessed Will's becoming, but more importantly than that, Will had finally become. He had given in to his darkness, become what he'd always feared, and he was at peace with that, as long as they were together. Whatever happened would be fate, justice, whether they lived together or died together. And then they hit the water.

It was freezing. The shock of the water thrust them apart, and it took an eternity to claw his way to the surface, fighting the waves. When he came up for air, he was alone. He tread water, scanning the waves desperately for a glimpse of Hannibal. He wasn't supposed to be alone. Nothing, nothing, and in the back of his head there was a voice running numbers, how long a person could survive without oxygen, how far the fall was, the fact Hannibal had shielded Will, despite the fact that Will had tried to kill them both, despite the fact that he may have succeeded in killing Hannibal. He couldn't be alone, please, let Hannibal survive.

There- a form, hazy with the depth of the water. Will dove, until the lack of oxygen burned his lungs, until he could reach Hannibal and pull him towards the surface. He was unconscious, head lolling against Will, but Will couldn't dwell on the dread that rose in him. He had thrown them into the water, he would have to be the one to get them out of it. The swim to shore felt like it took hours. He clutched Hannibal's body like a lifeline, trying to keep his head above the freezing water, even if it meant Will's would go under. He couldn't lose him, not again. He was shaking with cold and exhaustion by the time he dragged Hannibal on to the rocky beach, collapsing to his knees beside him, and coughing up seawater.

Beside him, Hannibal was still. Will turned him on his side, and water trickled from between his lips, blue with cold, but he didn't wake up, didn't groan or make any indication of life, just lay there, still and cold. Will panicked, checking desperately for a pulse, but his fingers were shaking and numb with the cold, and he couldn't tell.

"No, no, no. Hannibal."

Will started compressions, hissing when the pain from his shoulder finally made itself known, but he ignored it. Straight elbows, count them out, breathe into his lungs for him, he tried to push down the emotions threatening to overwhelm him, trying to focus on the compressions.

"Come on, Hannibal. Don't do this, you don't get to leave me like this. Just breathe, damn you!"

He was crying now, tears streaming down his face and burning where they ran into the hole in his cheek, and he was still doing compressions, and that voice was back, whispering that he would be alone, that Hannibal was dead and Will was just crying over a corpse. He wouldn't abandon Hannibal again, couldn't, not even after everything he'd done, everything they'd done to each other. If he was- Will had to force himself to think the word, even as he continued his compressions- if he was dead, then Will might just walk back into those

crashing waves, because the only thing that he had left, the only thing that mattered, was under his hands, laid out beside him on this beach.

“Please,” he whispered, Hannibal’s face blurring through his tears. Another breath, another set of compressions. Long forgotten prayers, learnt in dozens of churches in his youth, passed his lips, because even if neither of them believed in God, even if they were the last people who’d ever be granted a miracle even if God was real, it’s been ingrained in him, deeper than he’d realized. No god would ever care about them, not even Hannibal’s, who reveled in cruelty, and would probably take some wicked joy in separating the two of them forever. So he shifted them, begging Hannibal to come back to him, invoking Hannibal’s care for him, instead of the care of a God he’d never even believed in. Desperate pleadings of you’re supposed to love me, so come back and love me and I didn’t mean it, I take it back, please, I didn’t want you dead if I had to keep living.

There, a beat beneath his hands. Will froze, unsure if it was real or some fevered dream crafted from exhaustion and desperate hope. He pressed shaking fingers to Hannibal’s neck, and felt it again. Weak, but there.

He gasped, attempting to draw air into his lungs, and Will helped turn him on his side again. Hannibal started coughing, throwing up lungfuls of seawater. Will couldn’t help it, he started laughing, breathy and broken. It tore out of his raw throat, joy and disbelief at them being alive, of Hannibal being alive. And he was alive, groaning and falling back against the rocky beach, staring at Will like he was the one who might be a mirage instead of Hannibal.

They were both crying now, running searching fingers across each other, reassuring themselves that the other was alive, that they were not alone. Will realized, distantly, that he’d never seen Hannibal cry before, not like this, freely and openly, tears falling against Will for how close they were to each other. Live together it was, Will mused, a shaky smile fighting its way across his face. They were alive. They were alive.

After an endless moment, Hannibal forced them both to stagger to their feet, leaning against each other with Will supporting most of their weight. Under Hannibal’s raspy directions, throat raw from the seawater, Will led them to a hidden cove along the cliff, where Hannibal had stashed a boat.

They were bleeding and injured, would definitely need stitches and likely already had infections from the ocean and the slick rocks of the beach, but they were alive, and Hannibal, wonderful, ten-steps-ahead-of-everyone-else Hannibal, had made sure they had a means of escape. They were together, and they were alive, and Will felt at peace, but this time, it was shot through with joy.

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